



Illinois Heartland Library System

MEMO TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Leslie Bednar
DATE: September 20, 2017
RE: Libraries and the Search for Real News

The Executive Committee has expressed an interest in occasionally featuring topics of current library interest at board meetings. For our September meeting we begin with information literacy, and fake news in particular. We look forward to our discussion and hope you will find the linked resources helpful.

Thank you for your consideration.

Libraries and the Search for Real News

The notion of fake news continues to persist in popular culture. While not a new concept, it recently entered our lexicon and has been appropriated in an attack against First Amendment rights.

As community partners, libraries provide information access without bias or filters. In the age of the internet, where the smallest misstatement can become viral with the help of social media, it is essential to support member libraries who daily serve patrons' needs to identify and root out false/misleading information. Understanding how to combat fake news is a skill that begins with school-aged children and serves patrons well beyond that.

[Savvy Info Consumer: Fake News](#)

If you're not exactly sure what "fake news" is, this article from the University of Washington libraries will help. It defines "fake news" and then provides the reader strategies for evaluating a piece of information. Beyond fake news, it also includes evaluation tools for information that can be considered misleading, highly partisan, satire or clickbait. This also points readers to further information on the topic.

[Librarians Take Up Arms Against Fake News](#)

This article from the Seattle Times outlines what school librarians are doing to combat fake news at the middle school level. It is thoughtful perspective on what these students know and what they need to know. The article also points to the importance of a skilled school librarian in the life of that particular academic community.

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[Pew Research Center: Millennials Say Libraries Help Find Reliable Information](#)

A recent Pew Research Center article states millennials are more likely than older generations to turn to libraries to find trustworthy information, make informed decisions and learn new things. This is welcome and hopeful news as we look to younger patrons to gauge their support of library services. The research also shares insights into additional services libraries may offer patrons that help them: navigate our information-heavy society and provide a level playing field in our digital culture.

Here are URLs for the links above:

<http://guides.lib.uw.edu/research/evaluate/fakenews><http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/librarians-take-up-arms-against-fake-news/>

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/30/most-americans-especially-millennials-say-libraries-can-help-them-find-reliable-trustworthy-information/>

You may find this resource guide from the American Library Association Public Programs Office helpful:

<http://www.programminglibrarian.org/articles/fake-news-library-round>